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YOUNG AVENGERS®

SIDE-BY-SIDE WITH
THE NEW AVENGERS®

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YOUNG AVENGERS

FAMILY MATTERS
PART FOUR

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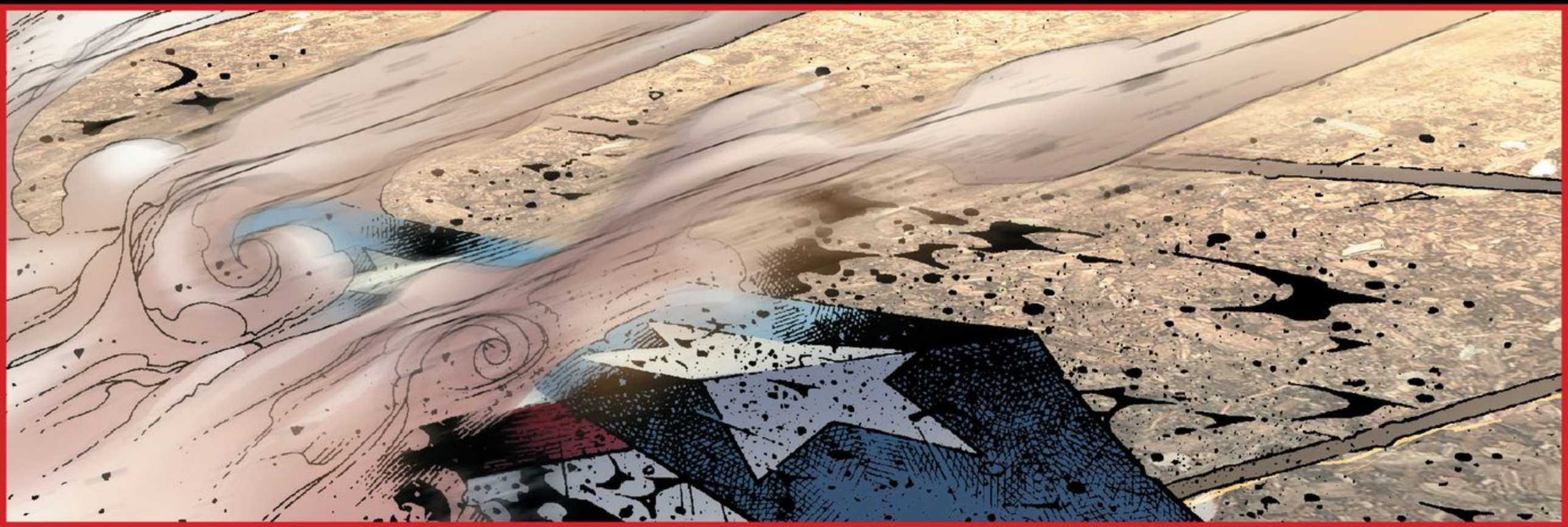

United by the Avengers Failsafe Program, a protocol designed to assemble the next wave of Earth's Mightiest Heroes, PATRIOT (ELIJAH BRADLEY, the grandson of the fabled "Black Captain America"), WICCAN (BILLY KAPLAN, a spell-caster), HULKLING (TEDDY ALTMAN, a shape-shifter), STATURE (CASSIE LANG, the size-changing daughter of the recently deceased Ant-Man), and KATE BISHOP (a resourceful teenage Avengers fan) were soon dubbed the "Young Avengers" by the press.

After a recent battle with the drug-empowered MISTER HYDE, Patriot was forced to confess he did not, in fact,have super-powers. Hoping to live up to his grandfather's legend, Patriot used mutant growth hormone, a steroid, instead. Ashamed, he quit the team.

The Young Avengers' subsequent efforts to convince Patriot to rejoin were cut short by the SUPER-SKRULL, an alien shape-shifter with the combined powers of the Fantastic Four, who abducted Hulkling, claiming the youth was actually the son of the Skrull Princess Anelle, heir to the imperial throne, and the Skrull Empire's only hope of winning their centuries-long war against the Kree.

Intent on rescuing Hulkling, the Young Avengers joined forces with the newly reconstituted Avenger THE VISION. The Vision, in turn, consulted the Avengers Failsafe Program and located THOMAS SHEPHERD, a volatile young speedster who looked remarkably like Wiccan--so much so that Wiccan came to believe they are, in fact, the long-missing twin sons of the Scarlet Witch, a former Avenger and perhaps the most powerful mutant in the world.

The Young Avengers' rescue mission was interrupted, however, by a squadron of Kree soldiers who claimed Hulkling was the son of the Kree Captain Mar-Vell and therefore a soldier in the Kree military. When the Avengers refused to surrender Hulkling, the Kree opened fire, wounding Patriot and igniting a full-scale Kree-Skrull War on Earth...

YOUNG AVENGERS created by Allan Heinberg and Jim Cheung

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CAP...

HOLD ON, ELI. WE'LL GET YOU OUT OF HERE, I PROMISE.

I'M SORRY.

IT'S OKAY. IT'S GONNA BE OKAY.

YOU'RE NOT GONNA *YELL* AT ME?

NOT *THIS* TIME, SON.

THEN I MUST *REALLY* BE IN BAD SHAPE.

I'LL TAKE HIM, CAP.

THE SENTRY WILL GET YOU FIXED UP. I'LL RADIO JESSICA JONES AND ASK HER TO MEET YOU AT THE HOSPITAL.

WE'LL FOLLOW AS SOON AS WE CAN.

DON'T LET THEM TAKE *TEDDY.*

DON'T WORRY, ELI...

...NOBODY'S GOING *ANY-WHERE.*

CAP! *BEHIND* YOU!

WE NEED TO GET YOU TO SAFETY, TED.

IF I GO, THEY'LL START *LOOKING* FOR ME. THEY'LL TAKE THE WHOLE *CITY* APART IF THEY HAVE TO.

IF I *STAY*, AT LEAST THE FIGHTING'S *CONTAINED*.

ACTUALLY...

...BETWEEN THE TWO TEAMS, IT LOOKS LIKE WE'VE GOT THE SITUATION UNDER *CONTROL*.

LOOK *AGAIN*.

OH, NO...

SENTRY, IF YOU CAN *HEAR* ME...

...WE'VE GOT A *SITUATION* HERE.

I NEED YOU KIDS TO CLEAR THE AREA. *NOW.*

CAP--

THAT'S AN *ORDER.* GO!

I'M SORRY, BUT THE ONLY REASON THE KREE AND THE SKRULLS ARE EVEN *HERE* IS BECAUSE OF *ME.* SO I'M *STAYING.*

WE *ALL* ARE.

I DON'T HAVE TIME TO FIGHT YOU *AND* THEM.

THEN WE'LL FIGHT THEM *TOGETHER...*

AVENGERS ASSEMBLE!!!

GUYS! A LITTLE *HELP?* I'M BEING SKRULLED *ALIVE* OVER HERE.

DON'T WORRY, SPIDER-MAN...

...I'VE GOT YOUR *BACK.*

LITERALLY.

NOT TO SEEM UNGRATEFUL, CASS, BUT--CAN THE ROOF ACCOMMODATE YOUR *MASS* AT THAT SIZE?

OOPS. DIDN'T *THINK* OF THAT.

IT'S OKAY. WE CAN'T *ALL* BE HYPER-NEUROTIC, RECOVERING SCIENCE GEEKS.

YOU WERE A GEEK?

THAT WAS A *JOKE,* RIGHT?

ZZT

UHN--

SPIDER-WOMAN!

TECHNOLOGY'S ALWAYS GREAT IN *THEORY--*

--BUT IN THE *WRONG* HANDS--

BEHIND YOU!!!

...IT CAN DO SERIOUS *DAMAGE.*

THANKS FOR THE SAVE, *HAWKEYE.*

THANK *YOU.* BUT I'M NO HAWKEYE.

REALLY? COULD'VE FOOLED *ME.*

I THOUGHT AVENGERS WEREN'T SUPPOSED TO *KILL.*

RELAX, JUNIOR. THEY'RE *SKRULLS.* THEY'LL GROW BACK.

EVENTUALLY.

IN *THAT* CASE...

POPP

YOU'RE *SICK,* KID.

I *LIKE* IT.

BILLY! LOGAN! WHAT ARE YOU *DOING?*

ACTUALLY, CAP, THAT'S *TOMMY.* HE'S A *SPEEDSTER.*

HE LOOKS JUST LIKE *YOU.*

YEAH. *ABOUT* THAT...

UM, GUYS? ALIEN SOLDIERS? TRYING TO *KILL* US?

MAYBE *NOW'S--*

--NOT THE--

--BEST *TIME?*

...REMEMBER WHEN THE SCARLET WITCH GAVE BIRTH TO TWINS WHO TURNED OUT TO BE MEPHISTO'S LOST SOULS?

HOW DO YOU *KNOW* ABOUT THAT?

BECAUSE I THINK TOMMY AND I *ARE* THOSE LOST SOULS.

VISION, I THOUGHT WE AGREED YOU'D REMAIN IN THE LAB UNTIL--

SIR, THE CRISIS AT HAND DICTATED A MORE AGGRESSIVE COURSE OF ACTION.

EVEN SO, UNTIL WE GET AN ACCURATE ASSESSMENT OF YOUR **POWERS**, YOU CAN'T JOIN THE AVENGERS IN THE FIELD.

I UNDERSTAND...

THE YOUNG AVENGERS ARE **UNAUTHORIZED**. THEY DON'T EVEN OFFICIALLY **EXIST**.

...WHICH IS WHY I'M JOINING THE **YOUNG** AVENGERS.

THAT HASN'T **STOPPED** THEM, SIR. AND IF I'M AS POWERFUL AS YOU SAY I AM...

...IT WON'T STOP **ME**, EITHER.

SO, THIS WHOLE KREE-SKRULL WAR IS BEING FOUGHT OVER *YOU?*

I'M JUST THIS YEAR'S **EXCUSE**.

BOTH SIDES THINK I'M GOING TO **WIN** IT FOR THEM...

...BUT I'M GOING TO **END** IT...

...OR GET **KILLED** TRYING.

HULKLING!

THE KREE HAVE THE HATCHLING.

SHOOT TO KILL!

HOLD YOUR FIRE!

WE CANNOT RISK HURTING THE BOY!

BETTER HE SHOULD DIE AT OUR HANDS THAN BETRAY US TO THE KREE...

...AND YOU ARE IN NO POSITION TO GIVE ORDERS, KL'RT.

HE IS YOUR EMPEROR, ZR'X.

RIGHT NOW HE IS A LIABILITY.

AS ARE YOU.

THEN I WILL RETRIEVE HIM MYSELF.

YOU HAVE YOUR ORDERS, MEN: SHOOT TO KILL.

SPARE THE HATCHLING IF YOU CAN...

"... BUT LEAVE THE SUPER-SKRULL TO *ME.*"

WE HAVE TO *END* THIS, KL'RT.

ONLY *YOU* CAN DO THAT, LAD.

EMBRACE YOUR DESTINY. RECLAIM THE SKRULL EMPIRE.

AND IF I *DO?* THE KREE WILL JUST BE *OKAY* WITH THAT?

OF *COURSE* NOT. THE WAR WILL CONTINUE...

...BUT NOT ON *EARTH.* YOUR FRIENDS, YOUR ADOPTED PLANET WILL BE SPARED...

BUT ONLY IF I GO *WITH* YOU.

BELIEVE ME, IF THERE WERE ANY OTHER WAY...

THERE *IS.*

STAY CLOSE AND FOLLOW MY LEAD.

WHAT ARE YOU DOING?

THE ONLY THING I *CAN* DO.

"I'M SURRENDERING."

THEN THE MATTER IS *SETTLED.*

THE SON OF MAR-VELL WILL SPEND HALF AN EARTH-YEAR WITH THE *KREE* AND HALF WITH THE *SKRULLS.*

AT WHICH TIME, HE WILL DECLARE HIS ULTIMATE ALLEGIANCE.

UNTIL THEN, HE'LL MAKE REGULAR, SCHEDULED VISITS HOME--TO EARTH.

*BUT IF TEDDY IS **HARMED** IN ANY WAY-- OR IF HE MISSES EVEN **ONE** VISIT--THE AVENGERS WILL SEE TO IT THAT THE KREE-SKRULL WAR IS ENDED ONCE AND FOR **ALL**.*

YOU *SURE* YOU WANT TO GO THROUGH WITH THIS, TED?

THERE IS NO OTHER WAY, CAPTAIN.

THANK YOU, ALL.

FOR EVERYTHING.

I HOPE ONE DAY YOU WILL UNDERSTAND WHY I HAD TO DO THIS...

...AND YOU WILL *FORGIVE* ME.

YOU ALL RIGHT, BILLY?

WHY ARE YOU ASKING *HIM?*

IT'S THE SUPER-SKRULL YOU OUGHTA BE ***WORRIED*** ABOUT.

I DO NOT KNOW WHAT YOU MEAN.

CUT THE CRAP, KID.

HOW DID YOU--?

SNIFF SNIFF

THE NOSE ***KNOWS,*** BUB.

I'LL BE DAMNED.

I ACTUALLY DIDN'T SEE THAT COMING.

SERIOUSLY?

SO, THE SUPER-SKRULL...?

...IS NOW A SUPER-***SPY.***

YOU GUYS ***KNEW*** THE WHOLE TIME? HOW?

BECAUSE WE KNOW ***TEDDY...***

...AND BECAUSE WHEN THE SUPER-SKRULL ***TALKS,*** HE ***DOES NOT*** USE CONTRACTIONS.

WHERE DO YOU KIDS THINK YOU'RE ***GOING?***

TO THE ***HOSPITAL,*** CAP. TO SEE ***ELI.***

YOU COMING?

LENOX HILL HOSPITAL

HE'S LOST A LOT OF BLOOD, SO THE DOCTORS CAN'T *OPERATE* UNTIL--

UNTIL THEY FIND A *DONOR*, I KNOW.

CAP, YOU DON'T *HAVE* TO.

YOU *KNOW* HOW HARD I'VE BEEN ON ELI, JESS. AND HE *STILL* TOOK THE HIT FOR ME.

GIVING BLOOD IS THE *LEAST* I CAN DO.

AND I'M SURE HE'D *APPRECIATE* IT, BUT...

...THE *OTHER* SUPER-SOLDIER BEAT YOU *TO* IT.

ISAIAH...

"THE DOCTORS ASSURED ME THEY'RE DOING EVERYTHING THEY *CAN*."

IF THE SURGERY IS SUCCESSFUL, ELI WILL BE ABLE TO LEAD A COMPLETELY NORMAL LIFE.

AND I'M HOPING THAT-- IN LIGHT OF WHAT HAPPENED TO HIM--*YOU* KIDS WILL, TOO.

SIR, WITH ALL DUE RESPECT...

...THE MINUTE ELI'S BACK ON HIS FEET, HE'LL BE CHASING DOWN BAD GUYS, POWERS OR *NO* POWERS. THAT'S JUST WHO HE *IS*.

IT'S WHO WE *ALL* ARE.

THE SAME AS *YOU*.

I KNOW YOU AND IRON MAN DON'T ***APPROVE*** OF US, BUT I CAN'T HELP THINKING...

...IF YOU GUYS ***HAD*** SUPPORTED US--IF YOU HAD TAKEN THE TIME TO ***TRAIN*** US--

--MAYBE ELI WOULDN'T ***BE*** IN SURGERY RIGHT NOW. MAYBE BILLY'S PARENTS WOULD STILL HAVE A PLACE TO ***LIVE***, AND TEDDY'S MOTHER WOULD STILL BE ***ALIVE***.

THAT'S HOW IT ***FEELS***, ANYWAY.

SO, IF YOU REALLY WANT TO ***PROTECT*** US...

"...YOU'LL ACCEPT US."
ALMOST DONE.
HOW ARE THE REPAIRS COMING?
DO YOU THINK CAP AND IRON MAN WOULD LET US USE THE MANSION AS OUR HEADQUARTERS?
THEY LET US KEEP THE VISION.
I THINK WE'RE LUCKY THEY'RE LETTING US USE IT FOR THE MEMORIAL SERVICE.
I'M AFRAID I GAVE THEM NO CHOICE.
WHAT DO YOU THINK, TED?
YOU DON'T SEE THE RESEMBLANCE?
NOT SO MUCH.
I THINK I STILL CAN'T BELIEVE CAPTAIN MARVEL WAS MY FATHER.
PEOPLE USED TO SAY I LOOKED LIKE MY DAD, TOO, BUT...
...HE NEVER GOT A STATUE.
THEN IT'S ABOUT TIME HE DID, DON'T YOU THINK?
AND YOU DO LOOK JUST LIKE HIM, CASS.
BILLY-- IT'S--HE'S-- PERFECT.
SO, ANT-MAN, CAPTAIN MARVEL, DR. DRUID, THE SWORDSMAN...
...WHO ARE WE MISSING?
ELI...

I FOUND *MOCKINGBIRD.*

SHOULDN'T ELI BE *HOME?* RECOVERING FROM MAJOR SURGERY?

YES, BUT UNFORTUNATELY COMMON SENSE IS NOT ONE OF HIS NEWLY-ACQUIRED *SUPER-POWERS.*

SUPER-*HEARING* IS, THOUGH.

ANY WORD FROM *TOMMY?*

NO. WE OFFERED HIM A *UNIFORM* AND A *CODE-NAME* AND EVERYTHING, BUT...

...I GUESS HE'S NOT THE CODE-NAME TYPE.

SPEAKING OF WHICH, CAP ASKED ME TO GIVE YOU THESE.

THEY BELONGED TO CLINT BARTON.

SO DID THE *CODE-NAME* CAP PICKED OUT FOR YOU.

NO. NO *WAY.*

LOOK, EVEN *WITHOUT* THE BOW AND ARROWS...

...THE ONLY AVENGER WHO EVER STOOD UP TO CAPTAIN AMERICA THE WAY *YOU* DID...

...WAS *HAWKEYE.*

For Hawkeye

"I DON'T KNOW WHAT TO *SAY...*"

...IF IT WEREN'T FOR *ME*, SHE'D STILL BE *ALIVE*.

TEDDY...

...YOUR MOM DIED PROTECTING THE ONE PERSON SHE LOVED MORE THAN ANYONE ELSE IN THE *UNIVERSE*.

SHE WAS A *HERO*...

...JUST LIKE HER *SON*.

I'M SO SORRY, MOM.

I LOVE YOU.

"SO, WHAT HAPPENS *NOW*?"

NOW WE START LOOKING FOR BILLY'S MOM.
THE SCARLET WITCH?
YOU DON'T WANT TO DO THAT.
THAT'S WHAT CAP AND IRON MAN SAID, BUT--
THEY WERE RIGHT.
THE SCARLET WITCH MURDERED MY DAD. AND HAWKEYE. AND THE VISION--HER OWN HUSBAND--
THAT'S BECAUSE SHE THOUGHT TOMMY AND I WERE DEAD. IF SHE KNEW WE WERE STILL ALIVE--
DOES ANYONE ELSE HEAR THAT?
HEAR WHAT?
THAT.
BOOM!
AN EXPLOSION ON THE EAST RIVER.
CHEMICAL OR--
HYPER-KINETIC.
OH, NO...
YOU DON'T THINK IT'S--
WHO ELSE?
IT WASN'T MY FAULT!

OKAY, IT WASN'T *ENTIRELY* MY FAULT.

TOMMY!

TOMMY? WHO'S *TOMMY?*

THE NAME'S *"SPEED."*

RIGHT, *HAWKEYE?*

"HAWKEYE"?

YOU'RE WEARING THE *UNIFORM...*

NICE *FIT*, DON'T YOU THINK?

I'M SORRY: *"SPEED"?*

WHAT'S WRONG WITH *"SPEED"?* IT TELLS YOU EVERYTHING YOU NEED TO *KNOW* IN ONE SYLLABLE.

TOMMY--!

"SPEED."

--WHAT DID YOU JUST *BLOW UP?*

THE UNITED NATIONS BUILDING.

WHAT?!?

WHICH I'M GOING TO NEED YOU TO MAGICALLY PUT BACK TOGETHER FOR ME AFTER WE TAKE DOWN THE *ZODIAC.*

YOU CAN *DO* THAT, RIGHT?

THE *ZODIAC?*

A GUY WITH *CRAB* HANDS, A GIANT *BULL,* THESE RIDICULOUSLY HOT FEMALE *TWINS?* THEY'RE HOLDING THE U.N. HOSTAGE.

WHAT'S *LEFT* OF IT.

SEE, *THIS* IS WHY I DIDN'T WANT HIM ON THE TEAM.

REALLY? *I* THOUGHT IT WAS BECAUSE YOU WERE JEALOUS OF ME AND *HAWKEYE.*

EXCUSE ME?

FIRST OF ALL--

JUST SO I KNOW: ARE WE GOING TO STAND HERE AND *BICKER* ALL DAY OR ARE WE GOING TO GO FIGHT THE *BAD* GUYS?

WE USUALLY MANAGE TO DO *BOTH* AT THE SAME TIME.

WE'RE *THAT* GOOD.

COME *ON!*

I'LL TRY TO KEEP UP.

THIS IS *NOT* GOING TO END WELL, IS IT?

NO WAY. BUT I HAVE TO *ADMIT...*

...I CAN'T WAIT TO SEE WHAT HAPPENS *NEXT!*

"OKAY. SO HERE'S WHAT WE CAN TELL YOU ABOUT THE NEW PLAYER IN TOWN--THIS *MASKED MARVEL.*

"*NOT MUCH,* ACTUALLY. HE'S A REAL MAN OF *MYSTERY.* BUT FROM VARIOUS NEWS REPORTS--"

"FACT ONE: HE CAN *FLY!*"

"ABSOLUTELY. WE THINK THAT *ENERGY SPHERE* AROUND HIS HAND HAS SOME SORT OF *ANTI-GRAV* PROPERTIES."

"YEAH--FOR *STARTERS!* THAT THING IS *KILLER!* Y'KNOW, IT'S A *FORCE FIELD,* TOO! TOTALLY *IMPENETRABLE!*"

"AS FAR AS WE *KNOW.*"

"AND IT CAN *CHANGE SIZE!* TOTALLY *SURROUND* THE GUY IF HE WANTS!"

"BUT THE CHERRY ON TOP..."

"THE *ATOMIC PUNCH?*"

"*ATOMIC PUNCH, DUDE!*"

"THAT *IS* PRETTY COOL, YEAH.

"AND THAT'S ABOUT ALL *ANYONE* KNOWS, REALLY. EXCEPT HE'S ONE OF THE *GOOD GUYS,* OF COURSE."

"OH, *NO DOUBT!* TRUTH, JUSTICE AND THE AMERICAN WAY--*ALL* THE WAY!"

"YOU ASK *ME,* HE'S A STRANGE VISITOR FROM *ANOTHER PLANET,* LEARNING THE WONDROUS WAYS OF OUR WORLD WITH THE HELP OF HIS POWERHOUSE PARTNER-IN-STOPPING-CRIME, THE *DYNAMIC CRUSADER!*"

"DYNAMIC CRUSADER?" DID I *MISS* SOMETHING? I'VE NEVER HEARD OF *HIM.*

NEWS TO *ME,* TOO.

SEE, MS. BOOSE, I WAS THINKING MAYBE A *POWER MAN/IRON FIST* PARTNER-THING, Y'KNOW? ONE'S FROM *ANOTHER WORLD,* ONE'S FROM THE *STREET...*

ONE *DOESN'T* EXIST...

ADAM'S GOT A *POINT.* YOUR ENTHUSIASM'S *ADMIRABLE,* EDDIE...

...BUT HERE AT MARVEL, WE PUBLISH COMICS BASED ON *REAL* SUPER HEROES– SPIDER-MAN, FANTASTIC FOUR, X-MEN...

WE TAKE CERTAIN... *LIBERTIES* BY HIRING TALENT TO FILL IN WHAT WE *DON'T* KNOW ABOUT THEM, BUT THERE NEEDS TO BE A *VENEER* OF REALITY.

DO ANYTHING TOO *OBVIOUSLY* FALSE AND IT SHATTERS THE READER'S SUSPENSION OF *DISBELIEF.* LIKE IF, SAY, DAREDEVIL BECAME *MAYOR* OF NEW YORK CITY...

YOU MEAN *MATT MURDOCK.*

MR. MURDOCK IS *NOT* DAREDEVIL. THAT WAS *NEVER PROVED.*

OR YOU COULDN'T STILL PUBLISH A DAREDEVIL *COMIC,* RIGHT? GENERALLY SPEAKING, THE LEE-INFANTINO ACT OF '64 ONLY ALLOWS PUBLIC-DOMAIN USE OF SUPER-TYPES WITH *UNKNOWN* IDENTITIES.

LIKE THE *MASKED MARVEL,* YES. LOOK, HE'S GETTING GOOD *PRESS,* MARVEL'S INTERESTED IN DOING A BOOK, AND YOU TWO HAVE DONE *GREAT* FILL-IN WORK, SO...

NICOLE'S *RIGHT,* EDDIE. THIS IS OUR *BIG CHANCE.* WE *ASKED* HER TO LET US PITCH THIS COMIC-- LET'S NOT THROW A *CURVEBALL* LIKE SADDLING OUR HERO WITH A *SIDEKICK.*

PARTNER, NOT SIDEKICK.

WHATEVER. LOOK, WE CAN BRING IN YOUR GUY LATER, OKAY?

DYNAMIC CRUSADER-- NAME LIKE THAT HE'S PROBABLY NOT SO MUCH A PARTNER AS A *RIVAL.* THE *DISTINGUISHED COMPETITION,* SO TO SPEAK.

DUDE! LIKE YOU READ MY *MIND!* THAT'S WHY HE'S SO PERFECT FOR THE MASKED *MARVEL!*

COULD BE THEY CROSS PATHS WITH AN INTERNET MYSTIC CALLED THE *I-MAGE.*

TOTALLY! OH! AND THERE'S, LIKE, THIS SUPER-POWERED *HORSE,* KIND OF *DARK*-COLORED? AND THEY FIGHT IN THE *ANTARCTIC* TRYING TO FREE SOME...SOME *SLAVE LABOR!*

YEAH... MAYBE.

SO...IS THIS THE *PITCH?*

SORT OF. LET'S BACKTRACK.

WHAT'S THE *FIRST RULE* OF WRITING? "*WRITE WHAT YOU KNOW.*" SO I WAS THINKING--

EXCUSE ME--PACKAGE FROM *MR. REED RICHARDS* FOR THE EDITOR OF THE FANTASTIC FOUR'S COMIC MAGAZINE. I BELIEVE THAT'S STILL *MR. TOM BREVOORT.* ANY IDEA WHERE I MIGHT *FIND* HIM?

NEXT OFFICE, MR. LUMPKIN. FUNNY HOW YOU CAN ALWAYS FIND *MINE,* BUT NOT *HIS.*

EVERY ROUTE HAS ITS *SCENIC PLEASURES,* MA'AM.

THAT'S... NICE...

YOU KNOW, OUR *MAIL ROOM* COULD DELIVER THOSE PACKAGES.

SORRY, MA'AM, BUT AS A SWORN OFFICER OF THE UNITED STATES POSTAL SERVICE, I RELINQUISH NOTHING--FROM THE LARGEST *PARCEL* TO THE SMALLEST *POSTCARD*--UNTIL IT IS DELIVERED TO ITS *RIGHTFUL RECIPIENT!*

NEITHER RAIN NOR SLEET NOR...

...DARKEST NIGHT... ?

NO EVIL SHALL ESCAPE HIS SIGHT.

EDDIE!

SHH--BOTH OF YOU! I THINK I HEAR SOMETHING OUT IN THE *BULLPEN...*

--FEW BLOWN CIRCUITS AND CRASHED COMPUTERS ARE THE *LEAST* OF YOUR WORRIES RIGHT NOW!

IN CASE YOU'VE BEEN LIVING UNDER A *ROCK*, THE NAME'S *ELECTRO*...

...AND SOME *DIM BULB* THOUGHT IT'D BE *FUNNY* TO HAVE ME *FAINT* AT THE VERY *SIGHT* OF THE AVENGERS IN THIS RAG.

ME. *FAINT.*

THAT *DIDN'T* HAPPEN! THAT WOULD *NEVER* HAPPEN!

CALL THE *COPS.* CALL THE *ARMY.* ASSEMBLE EVERY *AVENGER* THAT EVER *LIVED!*

IT WON'T STOP *ME!*

STAY *BACK*, MA'AM!

TALK ABOUT PROTESTING *TOO MUCH!*

I MEAN, IT WAS A *LAME SCENE*, BUT–

NO WAY, DUDE! IT *ROCKED!* EARTH'S MIGHTIEST HEROES SHOW UP AND THIS 40-WATT *FOLDS!* BET HE'S STILL GETTING THE *STAINS* OUT OF HIS SUPER-SUIT!

BENDIS WROTE THAT. HE'S A *GOD!*

HE LIVES IN *PORTLAND, OREGON,* EDDIE, WHERE EVERYONE DRINKS *FAR TOO MUCH COFFEE.*

WHAT'S *THAT* MEAN? IS THAT SUPPOSED TO *MEAN* SOMETHING?

IT PROBABLY MEANS I DON'T KNOW WHAT I'M *TALKING* ABOUT.

THEN MAYBE IT'S TIME TO *STOP* TALKING, Y'KNOW?

YEAH.

YEAH...

YOU. *SIT.*

WE'RE GOING TO PLAY A LITTLE GAME CALLED "*OLD SPARKY.*"

NOW. WHERE CAN I FIND THE GUY WHO PUT THIS PIECE-OF-*JUNK* COMIC BOOK TOGETHER?

I...I DON'T THINK THAT EDITOR *WORKS* HERE ANYMORE. HE...WAS FIRED BECAUSE OF THAT SCENE! YEAH!

YOU THINK I'M STUPID? I KNOW *TOM BREVOORT* WAS THE EDITOR. I KNOW HE *STILL* WORKS HERE. YOU SEE--I CAN *READ.*

SHOCKING, HUH?

BUT THAT'S *NOTHING* COMPARED TO THE 50,000 VOLTS THAT'LL POP YOU LIKE A *SAUSAGE* IF YOU DON'T TELL ME WHERE TO FIND THAT JERK IN THE NEXT *TEN SECONDS!*

BETTER IDEA.

LET'S DO IT MY WAY.

VZZH-KOOM!

WHO WAS THAT *MASKED MAN?*

MASKED MARVEL.

MASKED *MAN,* MASKED *MARVEL*--SAME DIFF.

NO, THAT'S HIS *NAME.* HE'S *NEW.*

ANYONE KNOW WHERE *ELECTRO* IS?

WHAT I WANT TO KNOW IS WHO *ELSE* HAS BENDIS TWEAKED OFF?

FORGET BENDIS! THINK *MILLAR*...OR *ELLIS!*

WILL SOMEONE JUST GET THE *LIGHTS?!*

KLEK

THERE.

NOW WE'LL ALL HAVE A BETTER IDEA WHERE WE...

CAUTION

"...STAND...?"

DID I HEAR MY NAME? WAS SOMEONE *LOOKING* FOR ME?

PACKAGE FOR YOU, *MR. BREVOORT.*

THANKS, WILLIE.

AH! MUST BE THE *POWER-DAMPENING* CUFFS MIKE McKONE NEEDS TO FINISH DRAWING THE NEXT ISSUE OF *FANTASTIC FOUR!*

BUT IT LOOKS LIKE THEY NEED TO BE USED SOMEPLACE *ELSE* FIRST.

HOPE REED LOANS US ANOTHER PAIR OR WE'LL *NEVER* MAKE DEADLINE...

LET *ME* DO IT, TOM! LET *ME* SNAP THESE BABIES ON THAT POWER-MAD *PERP!*

ALL YOURS, ALEX.

SO...WHAT HAPPENED?

ONLY THE *MASKED MARVEL* TAKING OUT ONE OF SPIDER-MAN'S OLDEST AND DEADLIEST FOES WITH ONE AWESOME *ATOMIC PUNCH!*

TOTALLY VINDICATING BENDIS'S *PORTRAYAL* OF THE VILLAIN, I MIGHT ADD.

THE MASKED MARVEL? WHERE? I'VE BEEN *WANTING* TO MEET HIM...

GONE.

HE'S A MAN OF *MYSTERY*, YOU KNOW.

YOU'RE...*EDDIE WARD*, RIGHT? NICE WORK PENCILING THAT *FALCON* BACKUP STORY.

HEY-- THANKS!

MUST'VE BEEN GREAT SEEING THE MASKED MARVEL IN *ACTION*--NICOLE SAYS YOU WANT TO *DRAW* THE BOOK.

WHO'S THE WRITER? SOMEONE YOU'VE WORKED WITH *BEFORE*...

THAT WOULD BE *ME*, MR. BREVOORT-- *ADAM AUSTIN.*

NICE TO *MEET* YOU. THINGS GOT A LITTLE... *INTENSE* OUT HERE WITH ELECTRO, SO I DUCKED INTO NICOLE'S OFFICE...

THIS? THIS DOESN'T LOOK LIKE IT WAS MUCH AT ALL. NOW THE SKRULL INFESTATION OF '02--*THAT* WAS BAD! PARANOIA, PANDEMONIUM, TOTAL CHAOS...

BELIEVE IT OR NOT, YOU GET USED TO IT PRETTY *QUICKLY.*

ALTHOUGH IT *DOES* MAKE GETTING BOOKS OUT ON TIME A REAL *CHALLENGE.*

SPEAKING OF WHICH--THE *MASKED MARVEL?*

IF WE DO A *COMIC* ABOUT HIM, WE NEED TO SHOW OUR READERS WHAT'S *UNDER* THAT MASK. ANY *IDEAS?*

ABSOLUTELY.

LIKE I SAID BEFORE-- FIRST RULE IS WRITE WHAT YOU *KNOW.* SO TO ME THAT MEANS JUST *ONE THING.* IN HIS *SECRET IDENTITY...*

...THE *MASKED MARVEL* MUST BE A *WRITER!*

MASKED MARVEL

KARL KESEL
WRITER

DAVID HAHN
PENCILER/INKER

PETE PANTAZIS
COLORIST

VC'S RUS WOOTON
LETTERER

NICOLE BOOSE
EDITOR

JOE QUESADA
EDITOR IN CHIEF

DAN BUCKLEY
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END.

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